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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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IT'S TRAVEL TIME

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

A Must for Your Itinerary. Coming to Washington, D.C. in the springtime? If so, your plans should include a visit to the 415 acres of beauty known as the National Arboretum operated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Spring blooming magnolias interplanted with holly trees are in bloom during the early part of April. A collection of 20,000 daffodil bulbs bloom throughout the month. Near the end of April, azaleas and rhododendrons come to full bloom and continue through May. More than 250 crabapple trees at the National Arboretum initially bloom in the early part of May. A display of 250 camellia plants located on the southeastern slope of the Arboretum facing the Anacostia River continue in bloom through April. At the end of April, the Dogwood collection will begin its bloom including 60 kinds of dogwood. A sight to see!

ARBOR DAY...

Is Tree Planting Day. The USDA's Forest Service reminds us that more than 30 states observe Arbor Day in April or May (many southern States pick a day in fall or winter). Besides improving the landscape, planting a tree or shrub is a good way to impress upon us our responsibility to protect and renew our natural resources. So why not observe Arbor Day this year? Perhaps you can spark a community project. Advice and information, as well as the exact date in your State is available from your State Forester or county Extension Agent.

WHO GETS THE PIECES?

The Divided Dollar. Do you wonder how we divide our food store dollar--according to U. S. Department of Agriculture statistics? You would find meats accounted for 20.4 percent of your food dollar in 1967. Poultry took 3.7 percent, fish for 1.6 percent, eggs for 1 percent and dairy products for 6.8 percent. Fruits and vegetables in both fresh and processed form won 17.7 cents of the sales dollar; cereal and bakery products 9.1 percent, foods such as frozen prepared products, baking needs, sugars, jams, and dressings made up 8.1 percent of sales. You may be surprised to know that supermarkets take in as much money from nonfood items as from their whole meat department.



PLENTIFUL FOODS LIST

Pick the Plentifuls. Take your shopping list with you to set your spring buying habits. National Turkey Month tops the list for April and may set the menu for the other plentifuls of dry beans, rice, onions, canned and frozen green beans, canned and frozen sweet corn and prunes. You can mix and blend peanuts or peanut products into your cookies, cakes or party foods as well as for your everyday sandwiches.

PESTICIDE ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Only As Much As You Need. Consumers are often told to buy the "giant economy size" when buying toothpaste or soap. The U. S. Department of Agriculture suggests that you reverse this in buying pesticides--buy only as much as you need for now. In the spring most homemakers increase their purchases of pesticides for home and garden use. Buying limited amounts will keep you from storing leftover pesticides--which is risky business. Each year hundreds of children are hospitalized after getting into pesticides their parents thought were safely stored away. Improper disposal may also result in pollution of your water systems. USDA recommends avoiding pesticide storage and disposal hazards by purchasing only as much pesticide as you need to solve the immediate problem at hand.

ON YOUR WINDOW SILL

Minigardens for the City--No place for a vegetable garden outside? Try a minigarden on your windowsill. Parsley and chives if given enough light, may be grown right in your kitchen and larger vegetables may, with proper care, do well in five gallon trash cans on your balcony, patio, or doorstep. Want more information? ARS horticulturists have prepared a new 12-page publication, "Minigardens for Vegetables," HG-163, just for you. Copies are available for 15 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Please use zipcodes.

ON THE HORIZON

A Better House--for Less. U. S. Department of Agriculture's Research Engineers continue to search for low cost housing...and low maintenance costs. Recent developments include one construction technique of bonding concrete block walls to eliminate the use of joint mortar. Another phase of the research deals with development of thin section concrete reinforced with short steel fibers for possible use in slab concrete floor construction and tilt-up wall panels. Another innovation may be the new underfloor heating system developed by Agricultural Research engineers (as reported in SERVICE, March '68). With proper development of various systems now under study, it may be possible to reduce costs and improve structural qualities of housing.

GROWING DEMAND STIMULATES RESEARCH

More Uses for Soybeans? The list keeps growing. About 105 million pounds of soybean protein products were used by U. S. food manufacturers in 1967. Baked goods accounted for almost half of the total volume. Over the past few years, commercial bakery use of soy protein has gone up 7 to 10 percent annually. One of the primary assets of the soy protein is the fact that it holds moisture in bakery products which helps keep them fresher longer. It's also used in meat products and various vegetable protein foods and beverages. The U. S. produces about 75 percent of the world's supply of soybeans.

FOOD DOLLAR NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

Percentage Wise, It's Encouraging... Today we spend actually less, percentage-wise, of our income on food than ever before. Percentage of income spent by average Americans for food declined from 20.7 percent in 1957 to 17.4 percent in 1967, down to 17.2 percent in 1968, according to U. S. Department of Agriculture statistics. Food costs have definitely not increased as fast as the wages of food buyers. Farmers received 39 cents out of the dollar spent for a market basket of U.S. farm foods in 1968, an increase of one cent over 1967. The remaining 61 cents of the food dollar went to processors, packagers, transporters, and all other persons involved in bringing goods from farm to the retail check-out counter.

IN RESEARCH

Imagine that...It whips! It doesn't look like whipping cream, but by homogenizing skim milk before drying, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists have discovered that the dried product is easy to whip. Homogenizing non-fat milk is a relatively inexpensive process and the finished product could be sold at a price comparable to that of powdered milk now on the market. Still in the experimental stage, however, the powder may be stored without refrigeration like regular dried skim milk. It can be made with one part water and two parts powder. Whipped for three minutes, it would be an excellent low-cal dessert topping.

POTATOES ON THE MENU

Eating Habits Change. For several decades following World War I potato use dropped more than a fourth, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Now the outlook is on the brighter side--the many convenient processed forms of potatoes are stabilizing the potato situation. The leading processes, potato chips, frozen french fries and dehydrated forms have multiplied fivefold.

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PUBLICATIONS

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR FOREST LANDOWNERS-PA 893

Do You Own A Woodland? Many Americans do. In fact, three out of every five acres of commercial forest land in this country are owned by private citizens. Many of these small woodlands, however, don't get the professional attention given larger forests, public or private. The USDA's Forest Service cooperating with State Forestry Agencies, has issued a leaflet describing the various kinds of planning and managing assistance available to woodland owners. It hopes this information will prompt them to seek professional forestry guidance. Copies of "Public Assistance for Forest Landowners," PA 893 are available from the Forest Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

PRUNING SHADE TREES AND REPAIRING THEIR INJURIES HG-83

HANDSOMER, HEALTHIER

Your Shade Trees. If you prune your shade and ornamental trees when they really need it, you can avert expensive major tree surgery. By inspecting trees regularly and pruning when necessary, you can improve their appearance, guard their health, and make them stronger. It's a good time to inspect your shade trees for winter damage. For helpful tips on when and how to prune your trees, send for "Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries," HG-83. It is for sale from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. Price per copy is 10 cents.

HOME HEATING: SYSTEMS, FUELS, CONTROLS, Farmers Bulletin No. 2235

ON THE HOME FRONT

Food for Thought. A less costly heating system correctly installed will be more satisfactory than an expensive one that is not the right size for the house or that is not properly installed, according to U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists. New houses may be oriented so that the main rooms and the large window in the rooms face south to receive maximum sunlight in the winter. Tight construction also reduces heat requirements. Information on all types of home heating systems--wood, oil, coal, gas, and electric--is included in a new booklet by the Agricultural Engineering Research Division of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Price 30 cents.

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